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Food Stamp Facts..

Eligibility Requirements



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The Food Stamp Program enables low-income households to buy more food of greater variety to improve their diets. Participants pay a small sum of money—the amount based on family size and net monthly income—and receive a larger value of food stamps, which can be spent like money in participating food stores.

Major changes were made in the Food Stamp Program by the 1971 amendments (Public Law 91-671) to the Food Stamp Act of 1964.

To qualify for food stamp benefits, households must meet certain nationwide eligibility standards such as income and work registration. With one exception, food stamp households must be able to prepare meals. The following questions and answers are about eligibility:

1. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS?

Single and family households, to be eligible for food stamps, must:

- Meet national standards for income and resources or have all household members receiving public assistance.
- Be made up of a group of persons, excluding roomers, boarders and live-in attendants, who are living as one economic unit.
- Cook their own food at home, except for disabled elderly who qualify for a delivered meals program.
- Make certain that able-bodied household members over 18 register for employment.

2. WHAT IS INCOME?

Income is any money received by all members of the household, except students under 18 years old, including wages; public assistance; retirement; disability benefits; pensions; veterans', workmen's or unemployment compensation; old-age, survivors, or strike benefits; support payments, alimony; scholarships, educational grants, fellowships and veterans' educational benefits; dividends, interest, and all other payments from any sources which may be considered a gain or a benefit.

3. WHAT ARE THE INCOME STANDARDS FOR A HOUSEHOLD?

Households in which all members are receiving public assistance or general assistance payments are eligible for food stamps without regard to income and resource eligibility standards.

The monthly net income a household can have and take part in the program is based on family size. The maximum allowable income for all other households including those in which some members are receiving public assistance or general assistance in any State (except Alaska and Hawaii)* or the District of Columbia shall be the higher of:

- (1) The maximum allowable income standards for each household size which were in effect in such State or the District of Columbia prior to July 29, 1971, or

<i>Household size</i>	<i>Monthly Income Limit</i>
1	\$183
2	240
3	313
4	387
5	460
6	533
7	600
8	667
Each additional	Add \$53

*Alaska and Hawaii have different standards because of substantially higher food costs in those areas.

4. WHAT HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES CAN BE DEDUCTED?

Expenses deducted from income include such mandatory expenses as: local, State and Federal income taxes; Social Security taxes under FICA; retirement, and union dues. Medical costs (but not special diets) when more than \$10 a month; child care when necessary in order to work; fire, theft, hurricane or other disaster expenses; educational expenses which are for tuition and mandatory school fees; court-ordered support and alimony. Rent, utilities or mortgage payments above 30 percent of income after all other deductions.

5. WHAT ARE RESOURCES?

Resources are such *liquid assets* as cash on hand, in bank or other savings institution accounts, U. S. Savings Bonds; stocks and bonds, and such *nonliquid assets* as buildings, except for the family home, land, and certain real or personal property. Each household is allowed up to \$1,500 in resources except for those households of two or more persons with a member or members age 60 or over—then the resources may not exceed \$3,000.

6. WHAT RESOURCES ARE EXCLUDED?

The following resources are not considered in determining food stamp eligibility: home; one car and other unlicensed vehicles; life insurance policies; income producing real estate; vehicle needed for purposes of employment; tools of a tradesman; farm machinery, etc.

7. WHAT IS THE MONTHLY COUPON ALLOTMENT AND PURCHASE REQUIREMENT?

The amount of food stamps you receive and the amount you must pay depends on household size and net monthly income. For example, a four-person household with a net monthly income of \$200 would pay \$53 and receive food stamps worth \$116 (or \$63 worth of "bonus" or "free" food stamps). If this same four-person household would make less than \$30 a month, there would be no purchase requirement to receive the \$116 worth of food stamps. (For further information, see Food Stamp Fact Sheet on the Monthly Coupon Allotments and Purchase Requirements.)

8. DOES EVERYONE HAVE TO REGISTER TO WORK?

Yes. With few exceptions, everyone between 18 and 65 years of age who is able-bodied. If one member ~~refuses~~ to register, then the entire household becomes ~~ineligible~~ to receive food stamps. (For further information, see Food Stamp Fact Sheet on Work Registration).

9. HOW SHOULD THE HOUSEHOLD APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS?

The head of the family contacts the local office of the welfare department; he completes an application form and is interviewed by a representative of the welfare department. He should have papers to show: where he lives; how many are in the family; how much income they have; how much they are paying for rent, medical bills, child care, education, and other expenses.

10. IF AN ELIGIBLE FAMILY MOVES TO ANOTHER FOOD STAMP AREA DO THEY HAVE TO REAPPLY?

No. A family intending to move to another food stamp area should apply at their welfare office for a transfer of their certification. If the household composition has not changed at the time of the intended move, certification will be continued for 60 days in the new area. The household must then request recertification within the 60 days following the move.

Any food stamp participant may request a fair hearing if he feels a decision regarding his participation has been unfair. Each household should be informed of its right to a fair hearing at the time of application. The standards for participation in the Food Stamp Program are the same for everyone without regard to race, color, religious creed, national origin, or political beliefs.

FOR FULL AND COMPLETE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FOOD STAMP CERTIFICATION OR WELFARE OFFICE

The Food Stamp Facts series include:

- **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**
- **PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS**
- **DISASTER SITUATIONS**
- **HOUSEHOLD INCOME DEDUCTIONS**
- **WORK REGISTRATION**
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